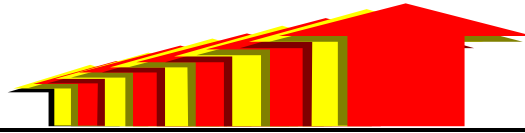


NEXT STEP PROGRAM OUTLINE FY 1999



Introduction

The following outline describes services for DTA customers in both the continuation of Welfare-to-Work services as well as the new Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services for Hampden County during fiscal year 1999. These two sets of activities (one for job seekers and the other for the newly hired) will be offered as one seamless program under Hampden County's Next Step Program operated by the two Career Centers: CareerPoint and FutureWorks.

While managing the two programs as one entity presents some bureaucratic and record keeping challenges (for example, Next Step via the Career Centers is the fiscal and contract administrator for the welfare to work program and the Hampden County Employment and Training Consortium is the fiscal and contract administrator for the EAP program) nevertheless, the managers and staff involved in DTA program planning are convinced that doing so is essential to maintaining the excellent customer service and the high performance standards to which we are committed. Our philosophy is always to let bureaucracy serve the customers rather than vice versa.

The program outline which follows was written with direct input from Career Center Directors, the Next Step Program Manager, and every one of the Next Step staff. While dollar amounts for reimbursements and benchmarks for hours of service delivery are still being negotiated by DTA and Career Center representatives, the services as they are described here offer our best plans for what the new fiscal year will offer. Nevertheless, it is fully expected that Next Step (NS) customers and staff, Career Center Operators, the DTA, the Hampden County Employment and Training Consortium (HCETC), and the Regional Employment Board (REB) will all contribute to improving, amending, and fleshing out the program outlined here. It is also fully expected that individual adjustments will be made at each of the four local Hampden County DTA offices, in order to meet the needs of their diverse customer bases.

The Outline is divided into the following areas:

- Job Search Programming
- Job Development Services
- Employee Assistance Program Services
- Customer Incentives
- Staff Training Needs

Each service area contains the following sections:

- Guiding Principles
- Content
- Format/Day to Day Operations
- Outcomes/Measures

In many cases, content, format, and outcomes are prescribed for Next Step by the Interdepartmental Service Agreement (ISA) between the Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) and the Massachusetts Career Center Office (CCO) and/or the Scope of Work Statement written for the EAP program by the HCETC. Within the outline, these mandates are presented as highlighted text.

Other service descriptions contain points which require further discussion by the Next Step Collaborators. These ***decision points will be named and italicized.***

Respectfully submitted,
June 18, 1998

JOB SEARCH PROGRAM PLANNING

Guiding Principles

- Work first philosophy and expectations will be emphasized during all job search activities:
⇒ Philosophy: "The best way to succeed in the labor market is to join it, developing work habits and skills on the job itself. Any job is a good job! Next Step is here to help you get that job and get on the road to self-sufficiency*."
- Two tiers of Job Search Services will be identified for billing and record keeping purposes but will be invisible to the DTA customer. (Hours and reimbursement rates still under negotiation.)
Level I Basic Job Search
Level II Structured Job Search
- Job Search Programming will be offered on both an individual and group basis.

Content

- Each DTA Office will have at least 20 hours of activity offered every week, with a menu of services to choose from similar to the calendar of activities offered by the Career Centers.
- Group activities to be offered weekly may include:
 - ◇ Orientations in both English and Spanish
 - ◇ EAP Eligibility Assessments
 - ◇ Defining Your Skills Workshop
 - ◇ Resume Workshop(s) (possibly a 2-3 part series with a follow-up indiv. appt.)
 - ◇ Applications Workshop
 - ◇ Interviewing Workshop
 - ◇ Networking Workshop
 - ◇ Using Temping to Your Advantage Workshop (guest speaker)
 - ◇ Skills Plus Workshop
 - ◇ 1-2 Job Clubs
 - ◇ Job Search activity "Lab", with individualized activity*
- Group activities to be offered on a rotating basis may include:
 - ◇ Field Trips to Career Centers or Employers
 - ◇ Computer Classes at the Career Centers (transportation provided?)
 - ◇ Meet the Job Developer*
 - ◇ Dress for Success
 - ◇ Life After Welfare (guest speaker)

* Work First: How to Implement an Employment Focused Approach to Welfare Reform, Amy Brown, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, p 2.

- ◇ Self-image: How You Can Change
- ◇ "Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway" (tape and/or guest speaker)
- ◇ "Zanger Miller " working video series
- ◇ Available Support Services (First Call or other guest speaker)
- ◇ Mental Health Resources (guest speaker)
- ◇ Substance Abuse (guest speaker)
- ◇ Domestic Violence (guest speaker)
- ◇ Budgeting/Building Economic Sufficiency (guest speaker)
- ◇ WIC (guest speaker)
- ◇ Improving Reading and Writing Skills/ESL (guest speaker?)
- ◇ ESL for the Workplace (guest speaker?)

* Indicates workshops for which curriculum needs to be developed

Day to Day Operations

- Workshops/group sessions will be a standard length, 2 - 3 hours.
- Trainers will create monthly calendar of activities (and meet the challenge presented above).
- Individual Case Management Activity for customers in job search mode will continue very much as they have been for current fiscal year.
- An MIS data base will be managed and maintained by Career Center staff.
- Trainers and Employment Specialists will report to a Team Supervisor who will coordinate all day to day activities in all 4 offices.

Outcomes/Measures

Still being negotiated.

JOB DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Guiding Principles

- Advocating DTA job seekers to potential employers is key to making successful placements, especially when working with people who have multiple barriers to employment.
- Job Development is a team effort because placements are EVERYONE'S responsibility. Employment Specialists and Training Specialists will continue to be actively involved.
- "Work First" program philosophy can be emphasized within a context of respecting the dignity and humanity of all participants.

Job Development Functions/Content

- Marketing DTA customers to potential employers
- Marketing employer benefit programs including the new wage subsidy program
- Meeting with Next Step staff
- Occasionally meeting with customers
- Working with the Regional Employment Board

Day to Day Operations

- Next Step will have a dedicated Job Development Specialist on staff for a trial period, depending on success and budgeting issues.
- Job Developer will work on site at each DTA office on a regular basis.
- Regular meetings between Job Developer and Career Center Employer Rep's will occur.

Outcomes/Measurements

- Permanent placements

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SERVICES

Guiding Principles

- Post Placement services are an essential part of any Work First Programming. They allow recently hired individuals to receive the support and guidance necessary to successfully navigate the initial stressful period that everyone experiences when they start a new job.
- Because of the melding of the Work First programming with the EAP services, Employment Specialists will have the opportunity to work with people from the beginning of their job search, until after they find work, building a relationship of trust and support.

EAP Content

- Post placement contact will be intensive, with strict guidelines established.
- Multiple contacts will occur the first few weeks on the job.
- Support services will include: (see attached sample outreach letter)
 - ◊ Trouble shooting and problem solving employer/employee relations
 - ◊ Designated childcare and transportation support
 - ◊ Financial support/payments for emergency needs
 - ◊ Financial support for work related clothing or tools
 - ◊ Training opportunities available
 - ◊ Phasing off of DTA

Day to Day Operations

- EAP administer is the Hampden County Employment and Training Consortium (HCETC)
- Next Step will contract with HCETC for service delivery.
- HCETC determines initial eligibility and refers people to program (and other services as well).
- Employment Specialists will carry a combined caseload of job search and recently hired (EAP) Customers.
- Employment Specialists will work with EAP customers to develop the required ISS plan
- Contact can be in person, by phone, or even a company visit.
- Much of this contact work will take place during evening and Saturday hours
- Employer/Employee "Hot Line" will be developed to facilitate swift response and assistance to any situations that might arise.

Outcomes/Measurements

- 240 Participants will be case managed in the EAP.
- 40-80 of these will be placed with wage subsidies (Job Creation Placement)

INCENTIVES

Guiding Principles

- Celebrating and acknowledging progress and achievements helps boost participants' self confidence and belief in themselves as well as creates a fun, lively, and energizing atmosphere.

Content/Types of Incentives Offered

- Certificates of completion after certain activities or hours of service
- Monthly pizza/graduation parties with families invited
- Donated prizes
 - ◊ calendars
 - ◊ appointment books
 - ◊ pins
 - ◊ pads
 - ◊ plaques
- Donated gift certificates
 - ◊ Mall Certificates
 - ◊ Clothing certificates
 - ◊ Beauty Salon certificates
- Raffles for people who get jobs
- Raffles for people who stay on the job for 6 months
- Raffles to offer donated prizes as listed above or cash

Day to Day Operations

- REB Access Enterprise Coordinator will work closely with Career Center Task Force to solicit business donations.
- Next Step staff will carefully plan, promote, and publicize all gifts and celebrations.

TRAINING NEEDS

The expansion of Next Step and incorporation of the EAP program will require additional staff training. The following is an initial outline of the training required.

TRAINING NEEDED	FOR	PROVIDED BY
Group Facilitation Skills	Employment Specialists	NS and Career Center Trainers
Post Placement Contact	Employment Specialists	<i>Unknown at this point</i>
Support Services available from HCETC	All Next Step staff	HCETC staff
Eligibility for EAP	All Next Step staff	HCETC staff
ISS Assessment Report	<i>Unknown at this point</i>	<i>Unknown at this point</i>
Administering Assessment Tools	All Next Step staff	Career Center Staff
Basic Computer Skills	All Next Step staff	Career Center Computer Instructors
New Employer Subsidy Program	All Next Step staff	REB